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ABSTRACT

The report represents an abridged summary of a study which assessed secondary and postsecondary work education programs and suggested ways they might be modified or expanded. A stratified, random sample of 50 work-education sites was drawn for the study from a set of 500 representative programs. Specific occupational training, dropout prevention, and career exploration programs were studied in farming regions, bedroom communities, single industry areas, and major industrial-business centers. The study's main findings are briefly described and form the basis for the following policy recommendations: (1) explore further the concept of establishing occupational training programs with a nonpaid work experience component; (2) expand the scope of dropout prevention programs; (3) develop formal structures for career exploration programs; (4) use vocational aptitude and interest instruments in student counseling; (5) develop more effective followup practices; (6) strengthen the role of program advisory committees; (7) encourage unions to participate actively in work education programs; (8) improve the effectiveness of public relations activities; (9) discourage discrimination on the basis of student attitude; (10) establish internship programs for work education coordinators; and (11) increase funding of cooperative education programs. Brief descriptions are included of 18 secondary school programs dealing primarily with cooperative education. (SD)

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CURRICULUM **Report**

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School-Supervised Work Education Programs

Editor's Introduction *The Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation, USOE, engaged the System Development Corporation to conduct an assessment of school-supervised work education programs. That study has been completed, and NASSP was given access to the Executive Summary of the study as well as to other study materials. This Curriculum Report is an abridged version of that Summary. The abridging was done by the editor, who also added the emphases, but the result has been checked with Steven Frankel, who directed the study.*

The Why and the How of the Study

The three primary purposes of this study of work education programs were:

(1) to examine the different configurations of work education which currently exist in the United States,

(2) to determine the degree that different types of programs are meeting their intended obligations, and

(3) to suggest ways in which different types of programs might be modified or expanded.

For intensive study, a stratified, random sample of 50 work-education sites was drawn from a set of 500 representative programs. The 50 were distributed as follows on what were felt to be the three most relevant variables:

Educational level: secondary/36, postsecondary/14;

Primary purpose: specific occupational training/30, dropout prevention/14, career exploration/6;

Industrial setting: farming region/15, bedroom community/11, single-industry area/9, major industrial-business center/15.

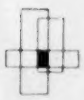
With respect to the distribution of the study sample by "primary purpose," it should be noted:

- Specific occupational training programs were, with two exceptions, of the cooperative sort in which students enrolled in vocational education courses use part-time employment as a primary means for applying classroom instruction.

While most of these programs involved students working for pay, there were some clinical programs in the allied health fields and two in non-health fields in which students were not paid for their work.

- Dropout prevention programs usually function by providing students with supplemental income which either permits or induces them to remain in school.

- Career exploration programs were defined for this study as those in which students are given the chance to explore occupational opportunities by observing workers as they go about their work, and by actually performing tasks for pay on various jobs.



What Was Learned

The data gathered can be looked at from several angles. To start with,

■ Specific occupational training programs appear to be generating the most enthusiasm among students, employers, and school officials, inasmuch as

Students feel these programs are providing them valuable job training,

Employers feel they are getting their money's worth, and

School people are satisfied with the learnings and with job placements after the training period.

Basic to this generalization was the finding that cooperative education programs are more likely than any other type to

✓ provide students with job-related instruction in school,

✓ have follow-up programs for graduates,

✓ provide job placement services and have a high rate of job-related placements,

✓ help students in deciding on an occupation, and

✓ provide students with jobs that fit into their career plans, have a high level of responsibility, and afford a high degree of satisfaction.

But there are also some negatives; compared with other types, cooperative programs are

✗ most apt to discriminate against students on the basis of student attitude,

✗ less effective in reducing student absenteeism,

✗ more apt to interfere with a student's other activities, in school and out,

✗ more apt to segregate job placements by sex, and

✗ more likely to restrict their offerings to students with rather conforming, middle-class behaviors.

Dropout prevention programs appear to be successful when viewed in terms of their limited objective of keeping students in school by providing them with financial assistance. While many such programs have additional goals such as improving disadvantaged youngsters' attitudes toward school and work, practically none attempts to offer students related classwork or intensive vocational training.

None of the career education programs studied provided students with systematic exposure to several different types of jobs which would better enable them to choose a career best suited to their own needs. Of the three kinds of work-related educational patterns covered by this investigation, the career education programs as a group received the lowest level of support from the schools.

When employer-related factors, the matter of pay, and the setting in which the program operated were analyzed, the data led to a number of additional conclusions.

The purpose of a program had very little impact on an employer's attitudes toward the program, even though the three types of programs possess very different characteristics. Quite possibly, this is because the employers have never been oriented regarding the different purposes of various work education program configurations.

However, the educational level of the program with which he was associated did make a significant difference in the employer's outlook. Those participating in secondary level work education programs, regardless of program purposes, rated overall program quality higher than did employers involved with postsecondary programs. (This in spite of the fact that from the standpoint of related placements and quality of training the postsecondary programs were superior to their secondary level counterparts.

Employer ratings of individual students had significant impact on the attitudes of both the students and the employers.

- For students, a higher rating by the employer was associated with greater job satisfaction;
- For employers, a higher average rating of an employer's students was associated with a higher rating of overall program quality.

Careful matching of students to jobs which meet their career objectives, so that they are likely to succeed and be highly rated by their employers, therefore appears to be one of the most crucial tasks for work education programs, in terms of both student satisfaction and employer acceptance.

Pay factors played an important role in determining the way the employers in the study sample viewed work education programs. More significant than the absolute rate of pay given work education students was whether they were paid the same or less than regular employees for the same work.

- Where students were paid less than regular employees, employers were significantly more likely to rate the program's overall quality as excellent.

From the student's point of view, in contrast, pay plays a minor and somewhat ambiguous role: students who are paid for their work are slightly, but not statistically significantly, more satisfied with their jobs than are students who are not paid. But the attitude of those not paid toward school is more likely to improve after joining the program. These findings were not predicted and the reasons for them are unclear.

- The industrial/community setting in which the program was located played a minor role so far as the characteristics of the various work education programs were concerned, and most variations found were not unexpected--for instance, pay rates and the proportion of ethnic minorities involved were higher in urban areas than elsewhere. There was one surprising finding, however:

    - The level of students' satisfaction with their jobs was significantly higher among programs in rural settings than among programs in any of the other three types of settings.

When data from secondary and postsecondary school sources were examined in relation to specific occupational training, it was found that:

- Postsecondary programs are more effective than those at secondary school level in nearly all aspects; specifically, they rated higher on

    - ✓ job-related instruction,
    - ✓ job-related placements,
    - ✓ student followup,
    - ✓ helping students to decide on an occupation, and
    - ✓ providing them with jobs that fit into their career plans, with jobs with high responsibility ratings, and with jobs with which they are highly satisfied.

- Two exceptions to this sweeping superiority of postsecondary programs over secondary ones were found, however:

    - employers rated secondary school students higher than those from postsecondary educational institutions, and
    - surprisingly, secondary school students earn slightly more than do postsecondary school student workers.

The reasons for these last two comparisons are not evident from the study data.

Two components of student satisfaction were considered in this study. First, how do students participating in work education programs compare with similar students who are not participating but are holding jobs with respect to (1) their degree of satisfaction with the jobs they held, and (2) improvement in their satisfaction toward school after they had joined the work education program or began working?

- The two groups differed little in terms of their satisfaction with their jobs, but
- Satisfaction with school increased to a significantly greater degree among students participating in the work education program than among those working but not involved with the program.

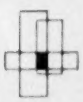
Secondly, responses from participating students only were analyzed to see what factors had the most impact on the degree of student satisfaction with jobs and with school.

The most important influences on the student's job satisfaction were

- how well he was rated by his employer, and
- the degree to which he felt his job afforded him responsibility.

Level of job responsibility also had a positive impact in improving a student's attitude toward school. (Other than this, only such non-manipulable background characteristics as ethnicity, sex, and age appeared to influence changes in satisfaction with school after a student enrolled in the work education program.)

This study also was concerned with determining the extent to which work education programs were fostering discriminatory practices. While no programs would admit to overt discrimination, subtler forms were rather common. Thus, while the majority of the programs were integrated, only 30 percent of the employers interviewed had been assigned students of more than one race, and only 39 percent of them had been assigned students of both sexes.



Some Policy Recommendations

While there is a definite risk in suggesting ways in which the structure of work education programs can be improved when the suggestions are based on a sample of only 50 programs with widely varying characteristics and goals, certain findings of this study were sufficiently definitive to allow policy recommendations to be developed. Eleven such recommendations are presented here.

I. Explore further the concept of establishing occupational training programs with a non-paid work experience component

A number of specific occupational training programs were examined in this study in which young people were not paid for work performed in on-the-job settings, most of which were clinical programs in health fields where financial compensation is not normally provided for work experience in hospitals and other medical facilities. But there were two other programs in the study in which students were not paid.

According to the findings, these programs in which students were not paid were very successful in providing students with good job training and work experience. Consider also another finding of the study, that one of the best predictors of employer satisfaction is the difference between what he normally pays for labor of a given type and what he pays for student labor. There is also some evidence that the employers in the study who paid students less were willing to provide them with more training time.

These considerations, then, suggest that there may well be a place for work education programs in all occupational fields that incorporate a component in which students spend part of their time performing supervised work on the job without pay.

It is recommended that a more detailed study be conducted of the programs of this type currently in existence to document program configurations capable of meeting training needs without exploiting students or antagonizing labor organizations, and to propose changes in labor laws and workmen's compensation statutes which would allow such programs to operate on a standardized basis.

While such not-for-pay work experiences should never take the place of customary cooperative programs, they can open up training slots with employers who are unable or unwilling otherwise to take on part-time student employees.

II. Expand the scope of dropout prevention programs

In most of the dropout prevention programs examined, students held part-time jobs in government offices or non-profit institutions which either provided them with funds needed to stay in school or served as incentives to stay in school. While as noted previously, these programs appeared to be meeting their basic objective, they were less successful in improving high school students' attitudes toward school.

Furthermore, it was evident that far too many students in the dropout prevention programs were placed in rather boring, dead-end jobs which didn't challenge their capabilities, which gave them no real appreciation for work, and which failed to allow them to explore career interests on their own. Efforts should be made, within the scope of present legislation, to place students in jobs far more interesting than those available currently in most of these programs.

It is strongly recommended that consideration be given to expanding the scope of dropout prevention programs by requiring participating employers to offer students at least one of two alternatives:

> The opportunity to link working for pay to specific occupational training offered at the job site by the employer. The employer thus would provide the training in return for obtaining a student's services at no cost. If legislation were changed accordingly, it probably would be possible to involve more private employers.
>
> The opportunity to explore different occupational areas. This probably would involve rotating students among employers on a scheduled basis and arranging for the student to have different responsibilities at each job site in order to study the various environments in which jobs exist.

While dropout prevention programs at the secondary level often enroll students who are significantly lower in academic ability than those in the cooperative and career exploration programs, the spread is not so great that the scope of the dropout programs cannot be broadened considerably.

III. Develop formal structures for career exploration programs

Career exploration has become a catch-all category into which many different types of programs place themselves by claiming that their primary objective is to familiarize students with work responsibilities and help them make informed career choices. But a disturbing finding of this study was that only nine percent of the students in such programs stated that their programs had helped them to decide on a career, whereas 35 percent of those in cooperative programs and 18 percent in dropout prevention programs made this assertion.

In fact, there was no way of differentiating the career exploration programs from the other two types studied short of looking at the program's specified objective, and we are forced to conclude that in nearly all cases career exploration patterns are not actually different in configuration from those of the other two types.

This suggests that an organized structure for these programs is needed, and should be developed and incorporated into law with its own set of guidelines. At the very minimum, career exploration programs should include (a) work familiarization, (b) diagnostic testing for skills and interests, and (c) scheduled job rotation.

IV. Use vocational aptitude and interest instruments in the counseling of students

In this study, it was found that the counseling aspects of all types of programs were relatively ineffective and did not contribute significantly in any manner to student success. The use of standardized measures to counsel students prior to entry in work education programs was not especially common, and the placement of students in jobs for which they have little aptitude or interest is not unusual. (This last problem was least frequent in cooperative programs where classwork serves to screen out many of the poorly matched students.)

It should be required that students be given vocational interest and aptitude tests before entering any work education program, and that they have a chance to discuss their test results with a qualified person before being assigned to their first work station.

V. Develop more effective follow-up practices

Program coordinators in all three types of programs agreed that student follow-up was the weakest feature of their work education programs. Correspondingly, one of the most frequently voiced complaints by employers was that they never find out what happens to students after they leave school. Furthermore, several employers stated that if they were regularly informed on accomplishments of students formerly in their employ--especially of those who had entered the field on a full-time basis--they might be more inclined to expand their participation and accept more students.

VI. Strengthen the role of program advisory committees

Studies have indicated that advisory committees are effective tools for building ties with the business and industrial community, but apparently most of these committees maintain a very low profile. Invariably, employers who are not members of advisory committees related to their industry do not know of or have not been contacted by these committees. Consequently, the effectiveness of advisory committees is severely limited since members appear to interact only among themselves and not to bring the other employers and union officials, whom they supposedly represent, into the picture.

VII. Encourage unions to participate actively in work education programs

This study included only a very few programs in which unions actively participated, but in nearly all of these the union representatives were as positive toward the programs as were participating employers. This is important because many program administrators said they were reluctant to solicit job slots in union-controlled operations because of anticipated problems, and because a favorite excuse given by employers who refuse to make training slots available is fear that admittance of students would lead to problems with the plant union local. But interviews with non-participating unions showed that the majority of them claimed they would participate if someone would actively pursue them.

Programs with active union participation benefitted in several ways:

- in permanent job placements of graduating students,
- in students being granted automatic acceptance into union apprenticeship programs, with time in the work education program sometimes being credited toward the apprenticeship, and
- by students being allowed many times to become full-fledged voting members of local unions while still in school.

VIII. Improve the effectiveness of public relations activities

Many programs of all three types have not paid sufficient attention to the various forms of public relations activities available to them. The most common reason given by employers for not hiring work education students was that they had never been approached about participating, even indirectly by advertisements or newspaper articles. As mentioned earlier, many employers weren't even familiar with the objectives of the programs with which they were involved.

Programs with strong public relations components demonstrate that this situation can be rectified through such activities as

- ✓ frequent releases in the public and trade media,
- ✓ gatherings (banquets, etc.) to which present and prospective employers are invited, along with school personnel, students, parents, union officials, and civic officials,
- ✓ involvement of parents of students in the work education program, and
- ✓ establishment of contacts within the local political structure.

IX. Discourage discrimination on the basis of student attitude

Several of the programs studied used "proper student attitude" as a program entry requirement. In some of these cases, it appeared that only students of a given race possessed that "proper attitude"; in other instances, it appeared that it was causing program entry to be limited to middle-class youngsters who could have obtained their jobs without the school's assistance or without special training. These programs ended up excluding students who, it was judged, could have benefitted from the training.

Regulations of this kind appeared, in many cases, to have been adopted more for the convenience of the program coordinator and the ease of program operation than because of any overt desire on the part of the school or employers to discriminate against a particular group.

It is recommended that plans or proposals for any work education programs incorporating federal funds

- be required to state, in specific terms, any behaviors that could cause a student to be excluded from a particular program, and
- require schools to notify students excluded on this basis, and to inform them as to what they can do to make themselves eligible at the next entry date.

X. Establish internship programs for work education coordinators

Approximately 70 percent of the programs studied have full-time coordinators or administrators, whose capabilities varied greatly. Most were knowledgeable in the vocational fields for which they were responsible, but differed widely in such regards as their ability to safeguard students from exploitation by employers or from working in unsafe or unpleasant working situations, their management skills, and their knowledge of vocational counseling techniques.

Internship programs should be established in which inexperienced or comparatively ineffective coordinators could work under the direction of more successful program administrators for one or two semesters.

XI. *Increase funding of cooperative education programs*

This study presents strong evidence that cooperative education programs are highly successful; that they appear to be meeting their intended objectives and generating support from students, instructors, administrators, and employers.

These programs appear able to serve far larger numbers of students than are presently enrolled, and expansion of the programs would not be hindered by lack of employer interest or by inability to accept additional student placements.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that funding be increased for this type of work education configuration.

Exempli Gratia

Editor's Note Space is not sufficient to permit commenting on the full range of work education programs in all 50 schools and colleges in the study sample. We decided, therefore, to provide brief annotations on only those sample programs that are (1) in secondary schools and (2) deal primarily with cooperative education. Even so, the notes had to be much too brief to describe any one of these curriculums. However, in each instance the name of a program coordinator or other administrator is given to facilitate follow-up on an individual basis.

NOME, AK: Rural Student Vocational Program. John Currie, P.O. Box 1168. 99762

The Nome-Beltz High School has approximately 400 students, most of whom are Eskimo youngsters who live in school dormitories. The 30 students enrolled in the program are flown to Anchorage (500 miles), where they have four weeks of on-the-job training and employment and are paid at the same rate as other new employees.

ANAHEIM, CA: North Orange County Regional Occupational Program (ROP). Stan Ross, 911 N. Brookhurst. 92801

Students in ROP (about 3,000) include all ability, age, and experience levels. Classes are held in a variety of community sites as well as in selected school facilities. At all work stations there are teachers to give related instruction. Students receive school credit for their work, but no salaries are offered.

FREMONT, CA: Work Experience Education Program. Vincent Mueller, 40775 Fremont Blvd. 94538

At Washington High School in Fremont, 88 students are involved in the program--which also operates in the other six high schools in the district. These students range from likely dropouts to those college-bound. All receive school credit for their work. Sample copies of "Alameda County Career Information Center Exchange Letter" available.

SALINAS, CA: Alisal HS Work Experience Program. Maurice Whiteley, 777 Williams Rd. 93901

In the three types of work experience available--exploratory, general, vocational--195 students are enrolled, with 31 of these in the vocational portion, which was studied. Students in the vocational portion must take a job-related class, but job training is provided by employers. Most students obtain jobs and then join the program.

eg DOVER, DE: Child Care Program. Joyce Fitch, Mayfair Apt. H-33. 19901

The Child Care Program operates in one wing of the Kent County Vocational Center, at which students spend half of each day and the other half at their home high schools. A three-year job-related curriculum is provided the girls in the program (no boy enrollees as yet): classroom instruction, then operation of the school's day care center, and finally placement on jobs in the community.

eg MELBOURNE, FL: Eau Gallie HS Diversified Cooperative Training Program. Gennie Dickens 32935

Twenty-five students are enrolled in this program; about 80 more are in four other work experience programs in the school. There is job-related instruction in a daily two-hour DCT class. Student placements include such job slots as librarian assistant, typewriter repairman, news layout trainee, and camper repairman. The coordinator has written a highly regarded learning packet for students titled "Work Attitude."

g MOSCOW, ID: Moscow Senior HS Hospitality and Other Service Training (HOST) Program. John Schwartz 83843

HOST is a one-year program for 12th graders who are interested in food service as a possible vocational objective. In the first semester, they spend an hour a day in the HOST classroom, studying a wide range of food service topics. Their math and English instruction is adapted to the HOST program, too. During the second semester, students work on jobs in the school or community in addition to taking a full course load. Enrollment averages 10 students, with about half of these male.

eg CHICAGO, IL: Chicago Vocational HS Office Occupations Cooperative Work Program. Myrtle Ivey, 7657 S. Indiana Ave. 60617

Students in this program are seniors who have previously had skill training in 10th and 11th grade business education classes. They attend school four hours each morning and then report to their work stations for three hours in the afternoon. About 50 percent of the graduates are retained by their employers on a full-time basis. Similar programs operate in all other Chicago high schools.

eg CLAY CENTER, KS: Community HS General Occupations Education (GO Ed). J. Lester Hooper, McKinley School 67432

GO Ed enrolls about 40 students, all seniors, who are working in six occupational areas--agriculture, distributive ed, health, home economics, office, and trade and industrial. Students may work before, during, or after school hours and receive credit for up to three hours of work. Specific occupational training is provided by programmed materials, and students also take a one-hour general orientation-to-work class.

eg COLUMBUS, KS: Distributive Education Program. Melvin Briley, 500 W. Maple St. 66725

Of the 13 seniors in DE, five are working as office clerks, two in food service, one in health occupations, one as a checker, and two in service stations. There is no academic requirement for admission to the program other than that a preparatory course must have been taken. Job-related instruction, both general and specific, at the school makes extensive use of programed materials. Because Columbus is a small community, most employers have participated in the program at one time or another.

RANGELEY, ME: Rangeley HS Cooperative Education Program. Margaret Foley 04970

Rangeley is a small, rural, rather isolated community with a total high school enrollment of only 80 boys and girls, 15 of whom are in the cooperative program. Because the winter months are slow, most job slots for students are available during the summer when there is an influx of tourists to the area. The school has also started four mini-courses as additions to the co-op program to provide job-related instruction in electrical wiring, nursery school work, small retail business administration, and grocery store operation. These short courses are taught on job sites by employers, who are paid $5 for their teaching.

WESTBURY, NY: BOCES Student Placement Services Program (Exemplary Electronics Segment). Henry Picarelli, 1196 Prospect Ave. 11590

Fifty-six school districts in Nassau County, N.Y., are served by a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Students come from their home schools to one of four BOCES centers for vocational technical training, though the Electronics Placement Service element operates in only one of these. When a student wants to go to work, the coordinator places him or her on a job for which he appears to be ready. The work/study schedule is readily adopted to needs of both student and job.

CARY, NC: Industrial Cooperative Training Program. Fletcher Powell, Box 38 27529

This program, in which about 60 students are currently enrolled, provides training opportunities in agriculture, distributive ed, health, occupational homemaking, occupational home economics, office, and trade and industrial occupations. Noteworthy among the specific jobs recently held was one in meat cutting, where the student was learning to buy meats, organize and schedule cutting, and maintain records for the meat department.

NORMAN, OK: Norman HS Cooperative Office Education--Data Processing. Mary Jo McKinney, 911 W. Main St. 73069

The seniors who are accepted for this program are trained for specific skills in data processing such as coding data, key punching, programing, and handling simple business problems with data processing applications. A limitation at the moment is that, in this instance, the community has only comparatively few businesses in which students in this field can be placed for the work part of the program.

LEBANON, PA: Cooperative Work Experience--Materials Handling. Gerald Seiler, 833 Metro Dr. 17042

This is one of several programs conducted by the Lebanon County Vocational Technical School, which serves all of the high schools in that county. This particular program came into being about three years ago in response to expressed employer interest. Students, who all are seniors, receive their basic training for their jobs at the school. Placement records show that 77 percent of the graduates of the program were placed in positions related to their training program last year.

DALLAS, TX: DE Program at Skyline HS. Stanley Baker, 7777 Forney Rd. 75227

This distributive education program is part of the basic curriculum of Skyline High. (Skyline Center is a multi-purpose facility that has three major educational components, of which the high school is one.) Eligibility for the DE program is comparatively strict: at least a "C" average, at least an 85 percent attendance record, and a positive attitude and acceptable personal appearance. Job-related instruction is provided through the school's DECA store, in which students own shares. Profits are assigned to the support of DECA activities.

KENT, WA: Diversified Occupations Work Release Program. John Fenton, 508 N. Central St. 98031

This is one of four career-oriented programs available in this school district. To be eligible, students must be seniors in some vocational training program. Before they are placed on work experience jobs they must submit vocational teachers' references stating that they are ready for work experience. Trainees in the area of retail sales must join the union, paying dues and receiving all the customary rights and privileges. (A union agent spoke well of the young people as active and enthusiastic union members.)

CHEYENNE, WY: Cheyenne Central HS DE Program. Kiki Okano, Capitol Bldg. 82001

Only two percent of the 65 students in this program when it was observed were from minority groups, although the school has a large proportion of black and American Indian students. To be eligible for this distributive education program, a student must be either an 11th or 12th grader and have a job--which the program staff may have helped him or her to obtain. (An unofficial requirement is at least a "C" academic average.)

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